

for Victor

Whether watching whales, investigating antiques or sampling the local catch, this coastal town is an enticing escape all year round.

WORDS **JANE PAECH**

MENTION **VICTOR HARBOR** to any South Australian and evoke fond memories of fish and chips on the beach and trips on the horse-drawn tram across to Granite Island. Little more than an hour's drive south of Adelaide on the Fleurieu Peninsula, "Victor" has been a popular seaside holiday destination and weekend getaway for generations.

Today the town has more to offer the visitor than ever, with a diverse array of accommodation and a growing number of activities and attractions on land and water. Being located in one of South Australia's premier produce areas ensures a range of excellent dining experiences and the farmers' market in town showcases a bounty of fresh local produce. To top things off, the cellar doors of the McLaren Vale wine region are just a short drive away.

Victor Harbor has long been renowned as a summer holiday destination, but it is also becoming a popular winter escape. With abundant marine life, Encounter Bay is one of Australia's foremost whale-watching locations from July to October, when southern right whales migrate north to breed. The South Australian Whale Centre re-opened last year after a makeover, giving visitors even more reason for a winter sojourn.

A few kilometres east, the seaside village of Port Elliot has maintained its old-world feel with cafes and antique shops. It is also a popular base for walkers and cyclists, with self-guided walks along cliff-top paths and the Encounter Bikeway, a bike trail linking Port Elliot to Victor and extending east past surf beaches to Goolwa. The coastal scenery is superb.

The towns are also linked by the historic Cockle Train (www.steamranger.org.au). In the early 1900s, daytrippers took the horse-drawn train to collect cockles from beaches near the mouth of the Murray, giving the train its name. ➤

Victor Harbor causeway



SEE & DO

**GRANITE ISLAND
RECREATION & NATURE PARK**
(08) 8552 7555.

www.graniteisland.com.au
Trundle across the causeway on the horsedrawn tram for a guided tour of the rookery at dusk when the fairy penguins return from a day of fishing.

**ALEXANDRINA
CHEESE COMPANY**

Sneyd Road, Mount Jagged.
(08) 8554 9666.

alexandrinacheese.com.au
The McCaul family creates a delicious range of traditional handmade products. Drop in for a tutored cheese tasting or indulge in an old-style milkshake, tea or coffee and a slice of ricotta cheesecake served with a thick, velvety dollop of jersey cream.

**SOUTH AUSTRALIAN
WHALE CENTRE**

**2 Railway Terrace,
Victor Harbor.**
(08) 8551 0750.

www.sawhalecentre.com
A place of exploration and learning with interactive exhibits on whales and other creatures of the deep. Features include a whale skull and the Rodney Fox exhibit, where

visitors can experience a shark dive without getting wet.

**VICTOR HARBOR
FARMERS MARKET**

**Grosvenor Gardens,
Victor Harbor.**

**www.victorharbor
farmersmarket.com.au**

Fill your picnic basket for the weekend with fresh seasonal produce from the Fleurieu Peninsula. Sat 8am-12.30pm.

SOUTH COAST SURF ACADEMY
Middleton. 0414 341 545.

www.danosurf.com.au
Learn how to ride a wave. Accredited instructors claim “a 95 per cent success rate getting people to stand in their first lesson”.

EAT & DRINK
FLYING FISH CAFE

**No.1 The Foreshore,
Horseshoe Bay, Port Elliot.**
(08) 8554 3504.

www.flyingfishcafe.com.au
Flying Fish Cafe is a local landmark. Tuck into gourmet fish and chips in a paper cone on the beachside deck or step inside for modern Australian cuisine with an emphasis on seafood. Select from a range of boutique South Australian and European wines. ➤



From above: Victor Harbor causeway; Jersey cows at the Alexandrina Cheese Company; lunch with a view at the Flying Fish Cafe





Travel Insider
 For this and other destinations visit qantas.com/travelinsider

BEACH HOUSE CAFE

62 Franklin Parade, Victor Harbor. (08) 8552 4417.

Ray and Ange Carroll have a great following at their cool cafe across the road from the beach. Wood-fired pizza, north Indian curries and live music. Open daily from 5pm, plus Sunday lunch.

doors opening onto a spotted-gum deck. Sleeps six with two bathrooms. Weekend rate from \$137 per person per night.

UNWIND HOLIDAYS

0411 141 329. www.

unwindholidays.com.au

Choose from a collection of luxury beachfront apartments and homes in Victor and Port Elliot, all with professional concierge service.

AUTHENTICITY HEALTH & WELLNESS RETREAT

14-30 Waterport Road, Port Elliot.

(08) 8554 2088.

www.authenticity.com.au

Set in expansive private gardens, this 1864 stone manor gives the feeling of being in a Tuscan villa. Weekend packages include morning yoga, vegetarian fine dining, pampering treatments for body and mind and a choice of six Mediterranean-style rooms. From \$450 per night per person (two night minimum long weekends and public holidays).

WATERSIDE RESTAURANT

Whalers Inn Resort, 121 Franklin Parade, Victor Harbor. (08) 8552 4400. www.whalersinnresort.com.au

Reserve a table on the deck overlooking Encounter Bay for Sunday breakfast or drop in on Friday or Saturday night for dinner. Whalers' large, contemporary dining area also offers casual bistro lunches at the weekend.

STAY

THE SUMMER HOUSE

Port Elliot Boutique Escapes, 7 Charlotte Street, Port Elliot. 0411 668 155. pebe.com.au

This chic "Hamptons-style" beach house is light, airy and contemporary, with French



From top: horsedrawn Cockle Train; inside The Summer House; surf beach at Middleton

For airfares call **Qantas on 13 13 13** or visit qantas.com
 For holiday packages to Victor Harbor call **Qantas Holidays on 13 14 15.**



TRAIN & BEACH PHOTOGRAPHY: RANDY LARCOMBE; SUMMER HOUSE: COURTESY THE SUMMER HOUSE